

**Thomas Jefferson to Joel Barlow, December 10,
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TO JOEL BARLOW

Washington, Dec. 10, 07.

Dear Sir, —I return you Mr. Law's letter, with thanks for the communication. I wish he may be a true prophet as to peace in 6. months, It is impossible that any other man should wish it as much as I do; altho' duty may controul that wish. The desire of peace is very much strengthened in me by that which I feel in favor of the great subjects of yours & Mr. Fulton's letters. I had fondly hoped to set those enterprizes into motion with the last legislature I shall meet. But the chance of war is an unfortunate check. I do not however despair that the proposition of amendment may be sent down this session to the legislatures. But it is not certain. There is a snail-paced gait for the advance of new ideas on the general mind, under which we must acquiesce. A 40. years' experience of popular assemblies has taught me, that you must give them time for every step you take. If too hard pushed, they baulk, & the machine retrogrades. I doubt whether precedence will be given to your part of the plan before Mr. Fulton's. People generally have more feeling for canals & roads than education. However, I hope we can advance them with equal pace. If the amendment is sent out this session, returned to the next, and no war takes place, we may offer the plan to the next session in the form of a bill, the preparation of which should be the work of the ensuing summer. I salute you affectionately.